

REMARKS

Claims 1-23 are pending in the application.

Claims 2, 13, 16, 19 and 21-23 are withdrawn from consideration.

Claims 1, 3-12, 14, 15, 17, 18 and 20 are rejected.

Claims 1, 4 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b).

Claims 3, 6-12, 14, 15, 17, 18 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claims 1, 6 and 12 are currently amended.

Claims 24-27 are new.

No new matter has been added.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 4 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,758,045 to Moon, et al.

The applicants respectfully traverse the rejections.

Claim 1 is amended to further distinguish the invention from the cited art, now reciting a compare circuit having a line connecting to the memory cell array, and a data modifying circuit adapted to write external depth data, via the connecting line, into a memory cell array. Support for this amendment can be found, among other locations, in FIG. 3, which shows a compare circuit (33) connected directly to a memory cell array (34) via a line labeled “comp.”

Moon fails to show or teach a compare circuit having a line connected to a memory cell array. Moon, in FIG. 9, shows a comparator 81A that outputs signals LT and GT to raster engine 70. These output signals LT and GT are comparison results (col. 6, line 43) that are fed into the outer-control logic 71, within the raster engine 70. The outer-control logic 71 decodes and transfers these comparison results to the memory control logic 72 (col. 6, lines 30-31). The memory control logic 72 receives the decoded results to generate a write enable signal /WE (col. 7, lines 26-29). Only after this sequence of steps can data be written into a memory, the memory being the Z buffer 81. Obviously, this long and circuitous approach to writing into a memory is very different from a compare circuit writing data directly into a memory cell array that includes a line directly connecting the memory to the compare circuit, as recited in claim 1. Moon therefore fails to teach or show each and every element recited in claim 1, so the applicants request withdrawal of the rejection.

Additionally, claims 4 and 5 depend from claim 1 and inherently include all of the limitations of their base claim. As discussed above, the prior art does not teach the limitations of their base claim much less the further limitations of the dependent claims. These claims are times allowable for their dependency and on their own merits. Allowance of these claims is requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 3, 6-12, 14, 15, 17, 18 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,758,045 to Moon, et al. as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,301,263 to Dowdell.

Claims 3 and 6-11 depend from claim 1 and inherently include all of the limitations of the base claims. As discussed above, the prior art does not teach the limitations of their base claim much less the further embodiments of the dependent claims. Therefore, these claims are allowable for their dependency and on their own merits. Allowance of these claims is requested.

Claim 12 is amended to recite a line connecting the compare circuit with the memory cell array, as in the amended claim 1. For at least the reasons discussed above regarding claim 1, these elements in claim 12 are not taught or shown by Moon.

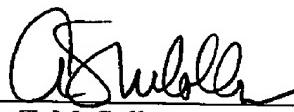
Furthermore, Dowdell does not make up for the shortcomings of Moon. Dowdell certainly does not show a line connecting the compare circuit with the memory cell array. Thus, the combination of Moon and Dowdell fails to render obvious claim 12, and the applicants request withdrawal of the rejection.

Claims 14, 15, 17, 18 and 20 depend from claim 12 and inherently include all of the limitations of their base claims. As discussed above, the prior art does not teach the limitations of their base claim much less the further limitations of the dependent claims. Therefore, these claims are allowable for their dependency and on their own merits. Allowance of these claims is requested.

For the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1, 3-12, 14-15, 17-18, 20 and 24-27 of the application as amended is solicited. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at (503) 222-3613 if it appears that an interview would be helpful in advancing the case.

Respectfully submitted,

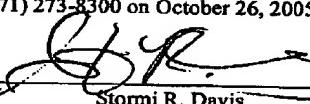
MARGER JOHNSON & McCOLLOM, P.C.



Alan T. McCollom
Reg. No. 28,881

MARGER JOHNSON & McCOLLOM, P.C.
210 SW Morrison Street, Suite 400
Portland, OR 97204
503-222-3613
Customer No. 20575

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Stormi R. Davis